

USAID/Liberia

Annual Report

FY 2005

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Liberia

Performance:

Challenges: Except for two years from 1997 to 1999, Liberia was in a constant state of conflict between 1989 and the signing of the Accra Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) in August of 2003. Poor governance was the underlying and immediate cause of Liberia's civil war. In a nation with a population of approximately 3 million people, the protracted war took 250,000 lives and displaced over 1 million people, including hundreds of thousands that fled the country as refugees. It is difficult to exaggerate the devastation that this war has had on Liberia's physical, social, political, economic and governance infrastructure. Liberia is the classic "failed state" in every respect. All national institutions have been destroyed or so neglected that they are completely non-functional. The central and local governments are virtually non-existent and unable to provide essential military or police security, a fundamental justice system, or even basic services like water, electricity, road maintenance, etc.

Liberia's human development indicators reflect the worsened conditions that resulted from the conflict and the collapse of governance institutions. There are no illusions about the challenges ahead. Over 80% of Liberia's population is illiterate and lives below the poverty line; unemployment is estimated at, or above 70%; 35% are malnourished; only 28% are immunized; 25% have access to safe drinking water; only 36% have access to sanitation facilities; and almost an entire generation has missed out formal primary education, learning instead to live by a warlord culture where force is the response to many of life's challenges;

With the ceasefire, the signing of the Accra Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) and the installation of a National Transitional Government of Liberia (NTGL) in early FY 2004, there was renewed hope that this latest agreement represented Liberia's best, and perhaps last chance to establish peace. The hope is that UNMIL's massive peace-keeping force and the substantial international goodwill and financial support will enable Liberia to consolidate the peace, begin the national rehabilitation process, and establish an elected and legitimate government by early 2006.

Key Achievements: Through the first half of FY 2004 the United Nations Mission to Liberia (UNMIL) successfully deployed the world's largest UN peacekeeping force of 15,000 troops and over 1,000 civilian police. By the end of 2004, with the cooperation of the warring parties, UNMIL had completed a relatively successful disarmament and demobilization program that has removed most small arms from the hands of the ex-combatants. Key Achievements: With the end of the war the Liberian paradigm changed for the donors. In early FY 2004 USAID, the U.S, congress and other donors focused on the need to immediately initiate post-war reintegration and reconstruction efforts to assist in the two year transition between the ceasefire and the election of a legitimate government. In the second quarter of FY 2004 the donors organized a conference in the U.S. to prioritize needs, and they adopted a sequenced strategy for this two-year period. Some of the most important needs and priorities identified in this process included the following:

- a) Security, including UNMIL deployment of 15,000 military and 1,100 international civilian police;
- b) Disarmament and demobilization of the armed factions and combatants and their re-integration into communities;
- c) Repatriation and re-integration for approximately 700,000 Liberian refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs);
- d) Reconstruction of damaged physical infrastructure;
- e) Restoration of some of the productive capacity of the economy thru employment generation programs, community-driven development activities, private sector development, etc.
- f) Re-establishing limited governance institutions, including government the provision of some basic

services such as water, electricity, sewage, education, and health.

USAID participated in identifying these needs and contributed to the strategic framework for the expenditure of the \$200 million Liberia Supplemental Appropriation. USAID's program in Liberia quickly adjusted to post-war realities, adopted a new strategy that was consistent with the priorities identified above, and initiated several programs.

In the early part of FY 2004 USAID significantly and rapidly increased the provision of emergency and transition assistance to Liberia to meet the needs of the most vulnerable groups, such as the IDPs, and to provide short-term, quick-disbursing aid to those institutions that needed immediate resuscitation.

USAID then began the design and implementation of a major program to generate employment for ex-combatants. USAID also initiated numerous, NGO-managed, village-level community development activities that fostered the peaceful reintegration and rehabilitation of combatants and other war-affected populations. USAID also initiated with several NGOs numerous, informal learning opportunities for children and youth affected by the war; helped to re-establish primary health care establishments in selected rural areas; provided psychosocial support and protection for war affected youth; and initiated activities to strengthen the development of political parties, build the capacity of the National Elections Commission, and develop the capacity of civil society organizations to participate in voter education efforts.

As noted above, at the start of FY 2004 USAID had already begun to implement several emergency and transition programs that addressed many of Liberia's immediate, post-war needs.

OFDA: For example, USAID's Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) contributed directly to USAID's post-war recovery strategy by providing substantial, critical, life-saving interventions for Liberia's most vulnerable, war-affected population. This program was implemented through 20 NGOs and international organizations, and included therapeutic and supplementary feeding for malnourished children; primary health care, including the provision of essential medical supplies and emergency vaccination campaigns; provision of emergency shelter, water and sanitation facilities; IDP camp management; protection activities aimed at preventing gender-based violence and other forms of abuse suffered by displaced and other vulnerable populations; mobilization and coordination of humanitarian relief organizations; better target relief aid; and improved planning for IDPs, refugees, ex-combatants and other war affected groups returning to their communities.

FFP: USAID's Food for Peace program also contributed directly to the achievement of USAID's overall strategic objectives by accelerating shipments of emergency food aid to Liberia. USAID became the most significant food aid contributor to the World Food Program (WFP) in Liberia providing 57% of total food aid resources. A monthly average of 6,200 metric tons of food aid were distributed to vulnerable groups, and most of this food aid constituted a basic, daily food ration for over one million beneficiaries. In addition, USAID provided Title II food to Catholic Relief Services (CRS) and its partners (World Vision/Liberia and Africare) to help rebuild community-level infrastructure, as well as the agriculture sector. The supplementary feeding program benefited 6,159 malnourished persons (1,752 male and 4,407 female including pregnant and lactating women) against a target of 23,400 persons. Changes in the government policy for the operation of supplementary feeding centers were the main cause for this low output.

OTI: In the second quarter of FY 2004 USAID's Office of Transitional Initiatives (OTI) began a program that supported USAID's post-war, transition strategy by helping to re-establish operative CSOs, NGOs and fundamental government services. Implemented through a USAID contract with Creative Associates, Inc., this program initially provided basic office equipment kits to key ministries that had been ransacked and looted during the war. (These were literally metal ship 'containers' full of furniture and supplies and popularly called "Ministries in a Box".) In addition, OTI provided other goods and services to NTGL offices, the National Election Commission, civil society organizations (CSOs), schools, radio stations, etc. to help re-start administration and basic services. By the end of FY 2004 OTI had provided more than sixty (60) such grants to various organizations throughout Liberia.

USAID's IDFA & DA-funded Activities: The donors and USAID quickly realized that to prevent a renewed outbreak of hostilities and war numerous employment and skills training opportunities would have to be made available for the more than 50,000 unemployed and rootless ex-combatants. With Liberia's unemployment rates estimated as high as 75%, USAID designed and began implementation of a flagship Liberia Community Infrastructure Project (LCIP) that offers ex-combatants and other war-affected persons immediate productive work and training opportunities that helped rebuild the nation. The hope is that those engaged in the program will conclude that there is a peace dividend through reconstruction and economic activity.

Begun in the third quarter of FY2004 and implemented through USAID contractor, Development Associates, Inc. (DAI/CARE), the LCIP project had organized hundreds of labor-intensive, public works projects in an seven (7) of Liberia's fifteen (15) counties. By the end of 2004 the project had generated over 500,000 person days of productive work for tens of thousands ex-combatants and non-combatants affected by the war. As the year drew to a close, USAID and DAI were employing over 7,000 workers every day in cash-for-work activities, and hundreds of others each day were engaged in training activities. These workers completed the improvement of over 1,500 kilometers of war damaged roads; cleared over 1,000 acres of brush; and repaired 11 schools, clinics, and administrative buildings as well as numerous water and sanitation systems.

These DAI LCIP employment and post-war reconstruction activities were also linked to practical skills training and assistance to micro-enterprises to create opportunities for people to abandon violence and earn an honest living. To support the physical and psychological normalization of ex-combatants, the LCIP provides non-formal education and skills training opportunities, and has initiated an integrated community-based strategy to address psychological trauma created by conflict.

In addition to the major LCIP program, USAID also initiated in FY 2004 several other programs that provided formal and non-formal learning programs at the community level for ex-combatants and returnees. Through these programs former fighters participated in accelerated learning programs and vocational training. USAID supported the UNICEF/Ministry of Education's Accelerated Learning Program (ALP), and through it helped to reopen public schools through the supply of textbooks and teacher training. Through Creative Associates, Inc. USAID provided resources to train 800 primary school teachers, update, revise and print books and materials for 10,000 students. In addition, USAID supported the Youth Education for Life Skills (YES) program to provide Liberian youth with rudimentary education and vocational training. Based on lessons-learned in other post-war countries, the YES curriculum emphasizes self-identity, peaceful living, health, good governance, and the way forward in a post-conflict environment. By the end of FY2004 over 1,500 Liberian youth were benefiting from the YES training program.

In FY 2004 USAID also initiated several multi-year programs with international non-governmental organization programs to provide counseling for the peaceful return of ex-combatants to their homes and the resumption of normal lives. These programs also promote village-level community reconciliation. For example, with USAID support to the International Rescue Committee (IRC) facilitated the reintegration of women and children associated with fighting forces in two of Liberia's more unstable counties. The IRC-Child/Youth Protection Unit provides care and protection to war-affected children and youth in six (6) major IDP camps in Liberia. Save the Children-UK (Save) provided care, protection, and reintegration services for children and their families affected by the war. This project included accelerated learning programs (ALP) for children and young adults, family-based care and transitional independent living arrangements for adolescents, and urban and rural based livelihood generating activities. Similar to Save, but working in different and more volatile counties, the Christian Children's Fund (CCF) implemented activities to empower communities and increase their capacity to reintegrate into communities the returning women and children who were associated with warlords and fighting forces. In target communities, CCF provided economic growth opportunities through the provision of literacy/numeracy, vocational skills training, entrepreneurship training, and links to employment through apprenticeships and mentoring programs. USAID's Displaced Children and Orphans Fund (DCOF) is also funding IRC's program to provide psychological support and protection for war-affected youth to help

mitigate the effects of violence and displacement on Liberia's youth.

In FY 2004 USAID's Community Peace Building and Development program promoted numerous economic and social development activities in war-affected communities. Implemented by AED/Mercy Corps, by the end of FY 2004 the program had successfully established Community Development Committees and REFLECT circles in 97 Liberia communities in three (3) counties and established over 15 self-sufficient community radio stations. In FY 2004 CHF International also began implementing another program, entitled Locally Initiated Network for Community Strengthening (LINCS), in insecure and war-damaged Lofa County. In this program CHF organized village-level peace councils and constituencies in more than seventy (70) villages in Lofa County. In addition to dealing with issues related to the return of ex-combatants and IDPs to the villages after prolonged absences, these USAID-supported peace councils have also been instrumental in mitigating the very tense ethnic tensions between the Mandingoes and the local Loma tribe persons in Lofa county.

In FY 2004 USAID also resuscitated its significant primary health care program that was interrupted by the war. In the past year this program provided primary health care services to over 500,000 people in 450 targeted communities in Liberia's Nimba and Bong counties through its network of forty (40) clinics. Implemented by a consortium led by Africare (prime contactor), the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health and the Moorehouse School of Medicine, the program also assisted the Ministry of Health to develop a national information program on malaria prevention for use at the community level and a radio series on malaria, safe motherhood and immunization, nutrition and diarrhea control.

With regard to reproductive health, USAID provided 85% of the commodities used to support Liberia's Reproductive Health Program and to fight STI/HIV/AIDS. This year, USAID supplied more than 4 million condoms and other contraceptive devices including 76,000 Depo-Provera, 201,000 Ovrettes and 667,000 Lo-Femenal. USAID provided 88,832 couple years protection through commodities donated to UNFPA to support efforts to reduce unwanted pregnancies and the transmission of STI/HIV/AIDS.

USAID has been a major contributor to the WHO Global Polio Eradication initiative for Liberia since the program's inception in 1998. In FY 2004 USAID contributed \$300,000 to the program, and similar contributions are planned in 2005 and 2006. As of the end of FY 2004, Liberia had no confirmed cases of poliovirus, and the indicators for polio continued to meet the certification criteria for polio eradication established by WHO.

In FY 2004 USAID's Leahy War Victims Fund supported the operation of the Benedict Menin Rehabilitation Center (BMRC) located in the Pipeline Community of Monrovia. The BMRC focuses on services for disabled children and provided a strategic option for the referral of the physically disabled.

Throughout the 1990's timber companies cut down Liberia's forests and traded logs for the weapons that fueled the civil war. For this reason the UN slapped Liberia with sanctions on timber exports to break the guns for timber nexus. In support of this effort, USAID collaborated with USDA's Forest Service to manage the Liberian Forest Initiative (LFI) to help reform and tighten the financial management of Liberia's forest revenues. This technical assistance effort was also designed to improve the capacity of Liberia's Forest Development Authority (FDA) to better conserve Liberia's rich forest resources. Some of funds were also directly allocated to Conservation International (CI) which has a presence in Monrovia.

Finally in the last quarter of FY 2004 USAID provided funding to funds have been programmed through the International Foundation for Elections Systems, Inc. (IFES), the International Republican Institute (IRI), and the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI) to strengthen Liberia's National Elections Commission (NEC), train political parties and polling place officials, and prepare NGOs for election observation. It is too early to tell what the effect that this USAID-supported technical assistance will have on Liberia's political process, on the political parties, on the capacity of civil society to educate voters, or on the ability of the National Elections Commission (NEC) to conduct "free and fair" elections. It appears, however, that USAID assistance to this democracy-building effort is certain to be critical in the year leading up to the October, 2005 elections in which Liberia's citizens will choose its President, Vice President, the entire Senate (30 Senators) and the entire House of Representatives (64 members).

Nothing is more important in FY 2005 than successful elections that results in a legitimate new government for Liberia.

U.S. Interests and Goals: Liberia has been a destabilizing force in West Africa and could continue to destabilize the region if positive action is not taken. The adoption of the Accra Comprehensive Peace Accords provide the first real chance in years to address the factors feeding conflict in Liberia and West Africa.

Results Framework

669-001 Successful Democratic Transition, Including Free and Fair Elections

669-002 Successful Transition From Relief to Recovery through a Community Reintegration Program

669-003 Increased Use of Essential Primary Health Care (PHC) Services Through Civil Society

SO Level Indicator(s):

CYP

DPT 3 Coverage

ORT Utilization Rate

TT 2+ Coverage for Pregnant Women

Use of Insecticide Treated Bed Nets

3.1 IR 3.1: Strengthened capacity of civil society to achieve sustainable primary health care delivery, including access, quality and demand of services

3.2 IR 3.2: Improved policy framework for primary health care service delivery in Liberia

3.3 IR 3.3: Increased availability of resources, including non-USAID resources for health sector development in Liberia

669-004 Increased Food Security In Targeted Areas

SO Level Indicator(s):

Increased Private Home Construction Using Manufactured Materials

4.1 Increased Production of Diverse Food Crops

4.2 Increased Economic Livelihood

669-005 Increased Role of Civil Society in Democratic Governance

SO Level Indicator(s):

Number of targeted LNGOs and CBOs sustaining social and economic development and peace building activities after CPBD phases out.

5.1 Civic organizations strengthened

5.2 Civic Action increased in targeted communities

5.3 Conflict management practices improved at community and cluster levels.

669-006 Community Revitalization and Reintegration